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furthermore scented heresy in them. To protect himself against accusations of doctrinal irregularities, it was customary for the founder of a new Order or sub-Order to demonstrate in his initial treatise, as the Grand Sanusi did, his orthodoxy by showing how his teachings followed those of some famous theologian whose orthodoxy was acknowledged by all. The Orders also aroused the enmity of the religious aristocracy of the Sharifs, descendants, or supposed descendants, of the Prophet Muhammad, who saw the common people looking to the Shaikhs and Brothers of the Orders for the blessing they had considered their exclusive privilege; and of the secular rulers, often themselves Sharifs, whose duty it was to support the clergy in the preservation of orthodoxy and who, on their own account, mistrusted popular movements of any kind, especially when, as was often the case with the Darwish Orders, they were associated with particularist aspirations. Opposition from these sources has not lessened—it has probably increased—the popularity of the Orders among the masses, who, rather dumbly but quite rightly, are irritated by governments and meddlers of all kinds. The humble have always sympathized with the Orders and have supported them as they support all those who, standing on common ground, can yet point the way to Heaven, and a brighter way than that offered by the cold learning of the official clergy.

For an Islamic Order is a way of life, and so it is called in Arabic a *tariqa*, a road, a path, a way. The various Orders counsel their followers to take different paths, stressing the role of reason or intuition, and differing from one another in the means they advocate of reaching the goal, but the paths lead to the same end, the identification of the soul with God by the elimination of all worldly desires and distractions.

The followers of an Order are aided to reach the desired state in which the body sheds its corporeal garment of the senses by the recitation of a *dhikr*, a religious formula, often accompanied, but not among the Sanusi, by violent rhythmic jerkings of the body and, in certain of the Orders, by music. According to Sufi teachings it should be repeated until even the words no longer make any impression on the senses and nothing but the form of the Divine Name is left. There results a completely passive, or empty, state, known to mystics of all religions, in

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which the soul experiences God. It is suffused with knowledge: not with *'ilm*, intellectual and traditional knowledge, but with *ma'rifa*, gnosis, wisdom. The Grand Sanusi and his successors very strongly disapproved of external aids to this end, such as processions, music, movements of the body inducing convulsions, piercing the flesh with sharp implements, and such other means as are used by some Orders, and steered a middle course between the illuminative, or intuitive, school of Sufi writers and the rational, or intellectual, school. Thus Sayyid Ahmad al-Sharif, his grandson, has in his writings, as Moreno points out,[1] exhorted followers of the Order not to depart from the rational, the chief aim of the Sanusiya being to make a man a good Muslim rather than a good mystic. Mysticism is something added to orthodox faith and morals, not a substitute for them.

It is for this reason that, as Sayyid Ahmad insists, perfection is to be sought through spiritual identification with the Prophet Muhammad rather than with God, at any rate for ordinary people. This is to be attained by contemplation of the essence of the Prophet and by an inner knowledge of him through constant imitation of his actions, attention to his words, and blessing him. The contemplation should be so intense that veneration of the Prophet pervades the adept till at last he hears only his name and has only his form before the eyes of the intellect. Then the Prophet becomes his sole guide and counsellor.

As this is not a treatise on Sufism there is no need to give further details about the mystical content of the Sanusiya. It should, however, be stressed that the rigorous orthodoxy of the Order, and especially its insistence on conformity to the original teachings of the Prophet, meant that the faith and morals which the Prophet preached to the Bedouin of his day, and which they accepted, were equally suited to the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, who in all essentials were leading, and still lead, a life like to that of the Bedouin in Arabia in the seventh century. In particular, the refusal of the Grand Sanusi to allow the more demonstrative forms of ecstasy, which, together with lack of organization and direction, characterize so many of the Sufi Orders of North Africa, enabled the Bedouin to adopt his teachings and ritual, for Bedouin are an undemonstrative people and it is difficult to imagine them piercing their cheeks with skewers, eating glass,

[1] M. M. Moreno, *Brevi Nozioni d'Islam*, 1927, p. 58.

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or swaying into convulsions. Indeed, it is noticeable that the Orders which permit such practices, notably the 'Arusiya, 'Isawiya, Rifa'iya, and Sa'adiya, so popular in the towns of Libya, have made no converts among the true Bedouin.

It is unnecessary to discuss further the mystical side to the Sanusiya for another reason. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica with whom this book is concerned have only the slightest knowledge of either the religious teachings or the ritual of the Order, and are interested in neither. They belong to the illiterate class of the *Muntasabin*, the simple adherents of the Order who follow its Shaikh personally and politically. It is very seldom, if ever, that the Bedouin know the special prayers and litanies of the Order, and their use of them, if any, is restricted to getting a scribe to write them on paper so that they can sew them up in leather and tie them to their bodies. It is only a tiny educated minority who regularly recite the prayer formulas and litanies. These are the *Ikhwan*, the Brothers of the Order. They live in the lodges of the Order and hold prayer-meetings there. Among the Brothers are some who have been raised to the position of Shaikhs of lodges, generally, in past times, after special training at the University of the Order at Jaghbub oasis, where they have received a diploma from the Head of the Order or from one of his family or inner circle. This inner circle, the *Khawass*, consists vaguely to-day of a few senior members of the Sanusi family and two or three learned Brothers and does not function as a Body, but in the past it was, according to Sayyid Muhammad Idris, an official Council controlling the affairs of the Order and was composed of four Shaikhs of the Order, who were not of the Sanusi family, under the presidency of the Head of the Order, who had to be a member of the founder's family. As Dr. Adams points out,[1] the fact that this inner circle is no longer a determinate Body indicates a change in the character of the Order, a development of its political, to the detriment of its religious, functions. This development has favoured the interests of the Sanusi family to the disadvantage of the Order as a whole.

The *Shaikh al-Tariqa*, Head of the Order, advised in past times by his Council, appoints the Shaikhs of the lodges and these Shaikhs can ordain Brothers and the Brothers can receive

[1] C. C. Adams, 'The Sanusiya Order', *Handbook on Cyrenaica*, 1944, p. 31.